THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH): (a) and (b) Offshore areas were offered to foreign oil companies for exploration of hydrocarbons five times in the past. Four exploration contracts were signed as per details given below:—

Contracts	Areas	Date of Contract
1. Carlesberg Natomas Group	West Bengal Offshore Basin	May 14, 1974
2. Reading & Bates Group	Kutch Offshore Basin	May 24, 1974
3. Asamera Group	Cauvery Offshore	Oct. 23, 1975
4. Chevron Oil Co.	Saurashtra Offshore Block-II	March 26, 1982

In all the cases the contractors relinquished the contract areas as all the exploratory wells drilled by them were dry.

(c) to (e) It has been decided to invite offers from reputed international oil companies for exploration in 27 blocks in the offshore areas of Saurashtra and Kerala-Konkan basins on the Western Coast and Cauvery, Krishna-Godavari, Palar and Mahanadi basins on the Eastern Coast.

It is envisaged that the contract will be in the form of production sharing with a seismic option, no signature or production bonus, no royalty payments, corporate income-tax at 50 per cent, bank guarantees to be obtained only for a percentage of the annual work programme, contractor to offer entire cost oil and the profit oil to Government at international market prices till India achieves self-sufficiency.

Actual response of the oil companies would be known after the bids are invited.

Construction of Thein Dam

@616. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report that appeared in the Times of India of January 10, 1986 to the effect that delay in taking a decision, about construction of the Thein dam, within a few days, is likely to result in delay in the construction of the dam by at least two years and a cost escalation of Rupees 364 crores.

(b) whether a decision in the matter has been taken, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if the reply to part (b) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Government's attention has been drawn to the report which appeared in the Times of India of January 10, 1986. The work on the construction of the Thein Dam is already in progress according to the present schedule and there is no delay. A decision on the foreign offers

@Previously Unstarred Question 21, transferred from the 21st February, 1986

of assistance which have been received can be taken only after these offers have been duly evaluated.

Hindustan Pilkington Glass Works Limited, Asansol

@617. SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM:
SHRI SUKOMAL SEN:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set up a high power committee to examine the prospects of reviving the Hindustan Pilkington Class Works Limited of Asansol which changed several hands during the last ten years and whose 1400 employees are waiting for a final decision in the matter;

(b) whether it is a fact that the nationalised banks and financial institutions are in favour of nationalisation of the unit; and

(c) if so, by what time a decision is likely to be taken in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) A committee consisting of representative of the State Government of West Bengal, Industrial Reconstruction Corporation of India and Grindlays Bank was constituted to consider the offers of varrious private parties who had shown interest in taking over the unit. The entrepreneur whose offer was found suitable by the Committee has not shown interest. The future disposition of the Company has to be decided by banks, financial institutions and the State Government.

(b) and (c) The Central Government have no proposal to take over the management of the undertaking of Hindustan Pilkington Glass Works Ltd. at Asansol under the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act or nationalise the unit.

@Previously Unstarred Question 157, transferred from the 25th February, 1986.

Newsprint prices

†618. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal for increasing the newsprint prices;

(b) what will be its likely effect on the newspaper industry and the reading public in general; and

(c) whether Government propose to rectify the situation arising out of the increase in the newsprint prices, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The claims of the indigenous newsprint manufacturers for revision of their ex-mill prices on account of the escalations in the cost of raw materials and other inputs were got examined by the Bureau of Industrial Costs & Prices before Government decided to permit the price increase with effect from 31-12-1985. A large part of the escalations in costs claimed by the manufacturers was on account of the increase in working costs for forest raw materials and related taxes, increases in royalties, hikes in power rates and increases in tax on self-generated power. Indigenous newsprint manufacturers are allowed to charge only the normative prices as recommended by BICP.

Apparel Export Promotion Council

619. SHRI GULAM MOHI-UD-DIN-SHAWL: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to refer to the answer to Unistarred Question 838 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 25th November, 1985, regarding the violation of the conditions of the licence granted under Section 25 of the Indian Companies Act, 1956 to the Appearel Export Promotion Council, New Delhi and state:

†Previously Unstarred Question 9 Transferred from the 21st February, 1986.